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Revision 4



E-MAIL AS A RECORD

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

DEFINITIONS

What is an Electronic Mail (E-Mail) Message?

A document created or received on an electronic mail system including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments, such as word processing and other electronic documents, which may be transmitted with the message.

What is an Electronic Record?

Any information that is recorded in a form that only a computer can process and that satisfies the definition of a Federal record.

What is a Record?

Recorded information, in any format, that is:

- *Created* in the course of business,
- *Received* for action, or
- *Needed* to document DOE activities.

What is an electronic records management system?

A system, that:

- *collects*, organizes and categorizes records (regardless of media), and
- *facilitates* their preservation, retrieval, use and disposition.



See EMCBC Records Management System Description and Records Management Procedures for detailed instructions and guidance:

- Management System Description: Records Management
- Procedure 1 — *Identifying, Filing and Maintaining Paper Records*
- Procedure 2 — *File Plan Maintenance*
- Procedure 3 — *Vital Records Identification and Protection*
- Procedure 4 — *Records Disaster Prevention Inspections*
- Procedure 5 — *Transferring Inactive Paper Records to Records Holding Area/Records Storage Facility*
- Procedure 6 — *Quality Records*
- Procedure 7 — *Destruction of Temporary Records*
- Procedure — *Identifying, Filing, and Maintaining E-mail Records*
- PS-205-05 — *E-mail Retention, Storage and Archiving*



E-Mail Messages Are Records When ...

- E-mails that document the formulation and execution of basic policies and decisions and the execution of an action.
- E-mails that facilitate actions or give direction.
- E-mails that document routine work activities.
- E-mails providing documentation of significant decisions and/or commitments reached verbally (person-to-person meetings, by telecommunications, or in conference) and not otherwise documented.
- E-mails providing substantive comments on a draft memorandum, if the e-mail message adds to a proper understanding of the formulation or execution of an action.



E-Mail Messages Are NON-Records When...

- E-mails received as part of a mass distribution such as:
 - EMFEDCAST
 - DOECAST
- E-mails from sales companies.
- E-mails that are personal communications.
- E-mails listing you as a cc: for "information reference only".
- E-mails planning lunch break with co-workers.
- E-mails for meeting reminders and/or announcements.

FOR RECORDS ASSISTANCE CONTACT A MEMBER OF THE EMCBC RECORDS MANAGEMENT TEAM:

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DOE Chief Information Officer (CIO)

The DOE CIO is a link between Information Technology and Records Management. To view Records Management Policy and Directives, Federal Regulations, and other guidance on records management visit the CIO website:

<http://enegy.gov/cio/office-chief-information-services/guidance/records-management.htm>

**National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)**

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is America's record keeper. Since 1934, NARA has provided comprehensive records management support and archival services to the Federal Government.

NARA's Records Center Program (RCP) has assembled a dedicated team of records professionals to serve you and your records center needs. For additional information on NARA visit the website:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/start/nara-regulations.htm>

Points to Remember about E-Mail

- Federal e-mail systems are for "official use" only by authorized personnel.
- Never combine personal and business messages in the same e-mail.
- Before deleting any e-mail message, the author should determine whether it meets the legal definition of a record and, if so, preserve a copy of the message in the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) (i.e., Auto-Declared Outlook folder).
- Non-record e-mails not declared into ERMS, will be deleted from the user's Outlook after 180-days in accordance with the Information Technology Policy, "PS-205-05—*E-mail Retention, Storage and Archiving*".
 - To be implemented when all users have been trained to use ERMS.
- Routine ERMS backups are created to facilitate restoration of a system or file in case of accidental or unintentional loss and are not an approved record-keeping system.

NOTE: Staff trained in the ERMS can also select the "Records Management" icon on the EMCBC Services webpage for viewing.

For all others, contact RMFO for the latest organizational file plan.

***NARA Factoid:***

*The National Archives and Records Administration estimates that the Federal Government creates over 36 **billion** e-mail messages a year.*